

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of New York and Pennsylvania we write in support of efforts to create passenger rail service between Binghamton, NY and Scranton, PA with a destination of New York, NY. We are excited that you endorsed this proposal at a White House meeting a few weeks ago, and we are happy to report that, at our urging, an Amtrak feasibility study is already underway for the route. Expanding passenger rail service between these cities will afford commuters an important new transportation option and could have a profound impact on economic development in the region.

We believe this project will compliment the existing effort to return commuter based service between Scranton, Pennsylvania and Hoboken, New Jersey, known as the New Jersey-Pennsylvania Lackawanna Cutoff Rail Restoration. The proposed rail service between Binghamton and Scranton could link up to the Lackawanna Cutoff project, potentially creating a rail link from Binghamton to New York City, via Scranton.

The Amtrak feasibility study is an essential first step to determining the viability of this project and will aim to analyze the costs and benefits of passenger service while documenting commuter patterns. We are anxiously awaiting the results, which we understand will be released shortly.

Amtrak is indispensable to the economy and business community. With this new service, more business and leisure travelers from Upstate New York and Northeast Pennsylvania would be able to access all that New York City has to offer. Rail was the original form of mass transportation; one that helped shaped our nation into the global economic leader that it is today. It connected the cities and towns, created jobs, and spawned a new way of thinking about commercial transactions. With energy prices more unpredictable than ever and our reliability on fossil fuels increasing every year, it is critical that Americans have an affordable, alternative means of transportation, and rail is once again poised to be the mode of the future, particularly in our states.

We believe this rail passenger restoration project reflects the precise mandates of your new budget and plan for moving our great country forward by emphasizing economic development, environmental stewardship, and infrastructure rehabilitation. Thank you for your support of this important project. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact one of our offices.

Sincerely,




Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Arlen Specter  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator